Athletic Council

February 9, 2024

Attendance: Linda Griffin (co-chair), Diane Barstow (co-chair), Nancy Buffone, Rod Warnick, Kirsten Britton, Ed Ward, Tim Mitchell, Doug Martini, Sid Ferreira, Jason Dowiak (coach guest speaker), Erica Lemm (guest speaker)

1. Approval of the minutes from December - approved

2. Guest Administrator – Erica Lemm, Assistant Athletic Director of Sport Administration

   Overseeing equipment and contest schedules. Most recently was Sr. Associate AD of Athletics at Mt. Holyoke. Was interim AD twice. Started with compliance and also has done facilities. Was a college soccer player and then helped with the team once injured. Was then at a sports coordinator at a community college in MI before getting into DIII teams. While at MHC, was on the NCAA membership committee which helps teams entering the NCAA.

   Q&A: Works with coaches closely for scheduling; Biggest surprise/reward experience was how schools handled and responded to the pandemic. Discussion of travel decisions – has to get the charters and hotels.

3. Guest coach – Jason Dowiak, Head Coach Women's Soccer

   7th year here. Lessons learned are around adaptability and patience. Has an "All In" mantra (shared handouts) with "inspire, invest, intent, and intensity." Was inspired by other coaches to have core values that the student athletes had buy-in with but was directed by the coaches. After 2022, team met and came up with additional terms for core values – respect, trust, courage, compassion – which helped them take ownership of the direction they were going. Two assistant coaches, they have a great connection. Focus on leadership development, community engagement, social media taskforce – these are part of the investment of the team. Everyone takes a role in one of the three groups, so they have more community service/engagement. The team works communications staff to get their messaging out. This has helped recruiting. Shared out their team inspiration and those photos are on the wall to remind them. One of two teams that has made the tournament in each of the last 6 years. Academically – went from 3.2 to 3.5 in the past 6 years. One semester where all athletes were > 3.0! Have also increased fundraising. The best in the A10 in not losing players to the transfer portal.

Q&A – Is the holistic approach part of where we are at today? Has always been part of his approach. Majors are all over the place. Community service projects led by Mary. Five players are taking their 5th year.

4. Athletic Director's Report (by Kirsten Britton, Sr. Associate AD)

   College athletics is a whirlwind – Dartmouth decision that athletes are employees, and all the other changes with conference affiliations, etc.

   Swimming and diving is finishing their season – most divers qualified for regionals. Indoor T&F is finishing up. Meanwhile the spring sports are starting – softball, LAX.

   Game experience did a good job keeping Mullins full during January but glad to have the students back. Basketballs are going – women's team is not what we hoped but the freshman are good, and recruits are good, so future is bright. Men's is doing well.

   Discussed the bubble – went down recently and caused some damage to equipment inside.

5. Check-in on subcommittee reports

6. Other

   Reminder that student-athlete exit interviews for winter are getting scheduled.